DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 242 696 SP 024 098

AUTHOR Kane, Pearl R.
TITLE A Teacher Institute for Beginning Teachers.
PUB DATE Apr 84
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 23-27, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; *Beginning Teachers; Career Change; *Change Agents; *Institutes (Training Programs; *Private Schools; Program Effectiveness; Secondary Education; *Secondary School Teachers; *Summer Programs; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Education; Teacher Effectiveness; Teacher Improvement
IDENTIFIERS *Joseph Klingenstein Summer Institute

ABSTRACT

The Joseph Klingenstein Summer Institute at Teachers College, Columbia University (New York), was established in 1982 for 50 beginning independent school teachers who demonstrated outstanding potential. The Institute's purpose is to increase teaching effectiveness and to encourage career commitment. The three weeks of the Institute introduce teachers to the complexity and challenge of the teaching act with a range of topics representative of the many factors characterizing the role of the secondary school teacher. To ascertain what impact the Institute might be having on the participants and their schools, questionnaires were mailed in December 1983 to the 98 teachers who had attended the Institute over the previous 2 summers and to the heads of their schools. Ninety-three percent of the school heads and 82 percent of the teachers completed and returned the questionnaires. There was remarkable convergence among the four sets of responses. Three major changes that resulted from the experience were teachers' increased confidence, competence, and commitment. The survey indicates that the experience of being exposed to professional knowledge and a supportive network of peers was overwhelmingly positive for this self-selected group of able teachers, most of whom lacked any previous professional training. (Author/JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED242696

A TEACHER INSTITUTE FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

Presented at the American Educational Research Association

1984 Annual Meeting, April 23-27, in New Orleans, Louisiana

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Pearl Rock Kane

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Pearl R. Kane
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Department of Educational Administration

Director
Joseph Klingenstein Programs

Teachers College/Columbia University
New York

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

✓ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

SP024098

A TEACHER INSTITUTE FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

Pearl R. Kane

The Joseph Klingenstein Summer Institute at Teachers College, Columbia University, was established in 1982 for fifty beginning independent school teachers who demonstrated outstanding potential. The purpose of the Institute is to increase teaching effectiveness and to encourage career commitment. The three weeks of the Institute introduce teachers to the complexity and challenge of the teaching act with a range of topics representative of the many factors characterizing the role of the secondary school teacher. In order to ascertain what impact the Institute might be having on the participants and on their schools, we mailed questionnaires in December 1983 to the ninety-eight teachers who had attended the Institute over the previous two summers and to the heads of their schools. Ninety-three percent of the school heads and 82 percent of the teachers completed and returned the questionnaires. There was remarkable convergence among the four sets of responses. Three major changes that resulted from the experience were increased confidence, competence, and commitment. The survey indicates that the experience of being exposed to professional knowledge and a supportive network of peers was overwhelmingly positive for this self-selected group of able teachers, most of whom lacked any previous professional training.

Introduction

The need for programs directed at teacher improvement and retention is more apparent now than it was three years ago, when Teachers College solicited funding for a summer institute in order to begin dealing with this problem. A spate of recent reports on American schools have pointed to the continuing gaps between our aspirations and achievements. The problems we face in education are aggravated by the failure to attract high-caliber people to the teaching profession. A National Institute of Education study conducted in 1982 indicates that the intellectual ability of those who intend to teach is markedly lower than that of college majors in most fields, and among those who enter, the most qualified are apt to leave.[1] The situation has been complicated in the wake of the women's movement, which has placed teaching in competition with other fields that are more lucrative and enjoy higher status.[2] Women, who comprise the bulk of the teacher workforce, have new career alternatives opened up to them. Those who remain often become discouraged by a lack of opportunity for advancement and meager compensation.[3] The low status accorded the teaching profession is evident in the results of a recent Gallup Poll. In response to the question, "Would you like to have a child of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career?" only 45 percent of the respondents said "yes" in 1983 as opposed to 75 percent in 1969.[4]

The private sector, with even more modest remuneration and greater demands on teachers, is not immune to the current problems. Salaries have failed to keep pace with the cost of living, and a relative lack of prestige is more apparent in many independent schools, where the students' parents are often highly paid professionals. Furthermore, the young teacher who does enter an independent school is often expected to serve as surrogate parent, disciplinarian, coach, moral guide, and counselor in addition to fulfilling teaching responsibilities.[5] Add to this the widespread notion in independent schools that teachers are considered "born, not made." Most independent school teachers are

liberal arts graduates; few have taken any education courses, a factor often pointed to with pride.[6] For many young college graduates independent school teaching is a tentative commitment. It is a way station between undergraduate and graduate school, a chance to support oneself before returning to college to prepare for a "real" career. The need for a program designed to help young teachers handle the multifarious demands of teaching effectively and to encourage able people to make a commitment to independent school teaching is greater today than it has been at any time in recent years.

The Klingenstein Summer Institute at Teachers College was established in 1982 to address these problems. Through an intensive three-week residential program for 50 independent secondary school teachers we aim to help beginning teachers to function more effectively in the classroom and to encourage the election of teaching as a career. Selection for the program, which is open to teachers with less than five years of experience, is competitive, with awards for participation going to those teachers who have demonstrated outstanding potential. Candidates are judged on the basis of a well-developed essay on their professional experiences, recommendations from school administrators, and previous academic records. With the cost of the Institute underwritten by a private foundation, the Esther A. and Joseph Klingenstein Fund, Inc., the participants receive full tuition, housing, and meals, and they are eligible for three graduate credits. Thus far 98 teachers from 23 schools in 25 states have participated in either the 1982 or 1983 Institute. The median age of teachers in the program is 25.6, with 2.75 years of experience.

The three weeks of the Institute are filled with activities designed to introduce teachers to the complexity and challenge of the teaching act. The range of topics and events is comprehensive and diverse, representative of the panoply of factors that characterize the role of the secondary school teacher. We strive to broaden their perspectives as educators by examining various facets of schooling--the instructional, curricular, political, psychological, historical, and philosophical.

Teachers are introduced to what Seymour Sarason calls "the universe of alternatives."[7] From studying the philosophy of Whitehead and Dewey to addressing such matters as parent conferences, the Institute strives to develop an awareness of what teaching and learning can be. A leitmotif of the Institute is the subject area meeting, which brings teachers in each discipline together with a master teacher to discuss the various aspects of teaching in their field--methodology, curriculum, materials, grading, and even testing. An attempt is made to convince the participants that teaching as an art involving judgment, creativity, intuition, and insight may be informed by professional knowledge. Approximately 90 hours during the three-week Institute are devoted to instruction.

Methods

In order to ascertain what impact, if any, the Joseph Klingenstein Summer Institute might be having on the participants and on their schools, we mailed questionnaires in the fall of 1983 to the 98 teachers who had attended the Institute over the previous two summers and to the heads of the schools from which they came. The questionnaire to the school head was to be completed by someone who had day-to-day familiarity with the teacher's work--the head, principal, department head, or dean. Both the questionnaire to participants and the one to school heads were similar. They asked about changes that may have followed participation in the Institute in areas such as teaching methods and curricula, professional development, colleague interaction, involvement in the school, and commitment to teaching as a career.

The response rate from both questionnaires was excellent. A total of 93 percent of the school heads and 82 percent of the teachers who had attended the Institute completed and returned the questionnaires. Of the 18 percent of the participants who did not respond, half were no longer teaching in the same school, having opted for

teaching positions in other schools, for graduate or professional studies, or simply for a year's hiatus while applying to graduate schools. Teachers continuing employment in the same school who failed to respond to the questionnaire were considered to have benefited greatly from the experience in the eyes of their administrators and were maintaining a high degree of involvement in school activities. One might speculate that the school administrators had more time to complete the questionnaire than the young teachers in their charge, because it appears that there is no significant difference between those who did respond to the questionnaire and those who did not. What follows here is a report of the findings from these surveys with full awareness that the data measure short-term outcomes of the program and can only be considered suggestive of longer-term effects.

Findings

There was remarkable convergence among the four sets of responses from participants in the 1982 and 1983 Summer Institutes and their school heads or administrators. This was despite modifications in the Institute program that ensued following an assessment of the initial Institute, a factor which we shall return to later on. Every participant reported that learning gleaned at the Institute had been utilized in the classroom. This was primarily in the areas of teaching methodology and techniques (82%), followed by the utilization of materials (47%) and curriculum (46%) introduced during the Institute. The supervisors concurred, reporting observable changes in these areas, with the predominance of change in teaching methods and techniques (77%).

Comments made by the participants indicating changes in teaching methodology and techniques were most evident in a movement away from teacher-dominated lecture styles to a more participatory approach giving students an opportunity for greater involvment and increased classroom responsibility. A teacher from New Hampshire said she was now

"asking more of students in class." Comments such as "more verbal involvement from students," "more discussion," and "less teacher-centered" were frequently noted under the rubric of "Increased Use of Teaching Methods and Techniques." Some changes resulted directly from specific readings, such as John Dewey's Experience and Education: "Dewey's book had an impact on the way I conduct my classes now--they are more participatory," wrote one teacher from Pennsylvania. Several observed that classes were "more lively now." Greater instructional variety, as in the use of primary source materials, for example, was being employed. A teacher from Connecticut said she had used "many new methods in the classroom--a greater number of visual aids. . . [and] resource materials," and she was "able to use them in more innovative ways."

Sixty-six percent of the respondents also reported that following participation in the Summer Institute there was increased interaction with colleagues, although the question appeared to be ambiguous to the respondents. Many who said "no" commented that interaction was high before and after the Institute, and others who said "yes" noted there was a "substantive increase"--one of quality rather than extent.

A majority of participants shared what they learned at the Institute through informal discussions with colleagues (92%) and administrators (59%), and some took the initiative to make presentations on the Institute at department meetings, faculty meetings, and/or state-wide independent school regional meetings.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents claimed that the Summer Institute had contributed to greater confidence (84%), increased enthusiasm (77%), and stronger career commitment (70%). Career commitment was also indicated by the participants' continued engagement in professional development. Forty-five percent of the participants did this through graduate work, workshops, or institutes. It is important to note that 34 percent of the 1982 participants and 18 percent of the 1983 participants

were currently engaged in or planning to enroll in a Master's degree program in the fall. There was also strong indication that the Institute contributes to continued professional development through reading and research. Many participants attested to the regular reading of journals introduced at the Institute.

Another question that resulted in ambiguous interpretation related to increased involvement in school activities following attendance at the Institute. While over half of the participants and their school heads reported greater involvement, several responded negatively, stating "already quite involved." One dean of faculty from Connecticut added, "It would be impossible to be more involved in school life than she was before without reducing her sleep or ruining her health." Several noted that the nature of involvement had broadened to include administrative and policy matters.

Finally, literally every single respondent, school administrators and teachers, said participation in the Institute was worthwhile. This is a noteworthy statistic, given a surprising finding: Two years following participation in the Institute 43 percent of the young teachers who attended did not return to their sponsoring schools. Most elected to teach in other schools or to engage in full-time graduate study programs, with a probability of returning to their schools.

Discussion

The findings of the study point to three major changes that resulted from the experience: enhanced confidence, competence, and commitment, and the three are interrelated.

CONFIDENCE

In itself, being part of a select group that has been chosen for outstanding potential imparts confidence. Admission to the program is on a competitive basis, and the award confers recognition on the school as well as on the teacher who is chosen. Announcements in the local newspapers and school publications contribute to the aura of prestige, and all of this occurs even before the young teacher sets foot in Teachers College. The value of recognition as a motivator and builder of confidence should not be underestimated.

The colleagueship of 49 other bright, interesting, articulate peers with similar problems also contributes to a sense of security. A teacher from Michigan said she learned "there is a world of colleagues out there!" This serves to combat the sense of isolation that many novice teachers experience and it allows them to confront the deep sense of failure that young teachers often harbor. The young teacher with a sense of idealism and verve may find few colleagues with whom to share ideas, disappointments, and dreams. The Institute not only provides a forum for sharing problems; it enables teachers to understand that problems considered idiosyncratic to them are problems general to school culture and neophyte instructors.

A Connecticut teacher emphasized the value of colleagueship:

> Every teacher should be offered a chance to live with other teachers, to share ideas, to compare successes, failures, philosophies, and techniques. For some, teaching can be a lonely and isolated profession, but the Institute proved it should never degenerate to this.

The discovery of common problems provides an incentive for openly sharing them, and the role of the Institute staff facilitates easy communication. The resident staff for the three-week Institute consists of veteran independent school teachers who are selected on the basis of expertise as well as for their personal attributes. They serve as coaches rather than as experts and are available for informal discussion throughout the duration of the Institute, participating in a myriad of activities

along with the young teachers. The Institute does much to restore a sense of self-esteem and personal growth. From numerous comments on being "more relaxed" to exclamations such as "I don't feel like quite such a dummy any more!" the Institute appeared to boost self-confidence. Two teachers summed up the relation between self-esteem and professional commitment:

- "It enhanced my confidence, confirmed that I have indeed chosen the correct profession for my interests and abilities."
- "The best effect of the Institute was the sense of pride and professional respect it imparted. . . clarifying my vision of what it means to be an educator."

COMPETENCE

The discipline meetings that allow teachers to discuss various aspects of teaching in their subject fields, such as methodology, techniques, materials, and curricula, provide a format for developing pedagogical knowledge. The notion that knowing what to teach can be informed by how to teach is relatively new to the independent school community. Indeed, there is almost a disdain for tainting one's academic record with "ed courses," and the typical independent school teacher is one with a strong liberal arts background who is repelled by the mere thought of pedagogical techniques and methodology.

Given this vacuum of professional knowledge, the young teachers who return to the classroom with an enlarged teaching repertoire, with knowledge of curricular and educational resources, are, in a sense, ahead of their colleagues. Their special knowledge gives the young teachers a sense of mastery. As discussed later on, the returning teachers often become agents of change in their schools.

The three-week Institute basically serves to accelerate experiences, allowing teachers to learn quickly what they might surmise on their own over the course of many years of classroom teaching. Enjoying greater confidence and competence, the young teacher becomes ready and eager to take risks, to try new approaches, and to influence colleagues upon returning to school.

COMMITMENT

The young teachers who participate in the Institute can no longer view themselves in an isolated context. Indeed, the teachers recognize that being an educator transcends the confines of a classroom or even a single school. The young teachers see themselves as part of a profession, the educating profession, and begin to understand the complexity of the educational process. The high caliber of the participants and the quality of the staff enhance the status image of the teacher. Far from being a "failure belt," the teachers in the Institute are among the best and brightest of American youth.[6] As one Pennsylvania teacher declared: "It is stimulating to be with bright, idealistic people and get a sense of what is out there beyond the ivy-covered walls of my school."

A teacher from California commented that enhanced professional esteem results in stronger career commitment:

> The Joseph Klingenstein Summer Institute develops the participant both professionally and personally. Self-confidence results from a heightened self-image as a professional educator. It is just the sort of "re-charging" needed before young teachers bail out for "easier" career tracks.

The administrators themselves observed increased commitment as well:

- "Les was exhausted at the end of last year and worried about his future. The Institute rejuvenated him and reinvigorated his belief both in himself and in independent school teaching."
- "The Summer Institute. . .took a teacher who was contemplating a change of profession and assured her that she was in the right [one]."
- "Patti had almost given up on teaching. The Summer Institute salvaged a wonderful young teacher."

More tangible evidence of career commitment was indicated by the response to the survey question on continued professional development. As noted above, 45 perecent of respondents were engaging in workshops and course work, and 26 percent were en route to Master's degrees. For the busy independent school teacher with modest income, the decision to pursue course work represents a serious career commitment, and the number

of those who would engage in formal course work may even be larger, given that there may be no university with geographic proximity to the school. Professional reading and research also indicate professional interest, and indeed many respondents listed educational and academic journals and specific areas of research they were pursuing. While career commitment must stand the test of time, there is reason to believe that the short-term effects of the Klingenstein Institute enhance career commitment.

Unanticipated Outcomes

The survey yielded several unanticipated outcomes. One was the absence of any significant difference between the effects of the 1982 and 1983 Institutes. Despite numerous modifications and improvements based on careful assessment of each activity, both Institutes elicited similar results. One may hypothesize that the features of the Institute that remained unchanged provide the necessary core, namely, the collegiality provided by the 50 bright young educators and the subject area meetings that occur throughout the Institute. The negative impact of an occasional unprepared lecture or inept lecturer may have minimal bearing on the Institute's outcome.

The ramifications of success also had unanticipated consequences. Confident people assured of their competence are also apt to take risks, which may help to explain why 43 percent of the 1982 Institute participants chose to leave their schools. Several of the administrators intimated on the questionnaire that the Institute had influenced the teacher's decision to go. Many of the administrators of teachers who elected to switch jobs had observed a notable change in the participant's self-confidence, and they made that clear. As the dean of a school in Rhode Island put it, "Too bad you inspired him to follow a career elsewhere. All the power to you! He was truly enthusiastic after the summer of '82."

But confidence and competence are not the only motivations for job change. Teachers whose own values conflict with those of the school administration are apt to discover that there are viable alternatives, perhaps brought to awareness by the Summer Institute. Teachers who feel they are being overworked or exploited may choose similar routes.

The favorable job market in independent schools makes mobility possible, and the attractiveness of teachers participating in the Institute makes them desirable candidates. Having participated in the Institute may also enhance one's prospects for employment. Several school heads have called our office to inquire about Summer Institute teachers who had applied for jobs, and one noted that "the Klingenstein Institute on the application jumped out at me." In the sense that "success begets success," having been selected to participate in the Institute insures that the teacher has already survived a selective process and makes the candidate more appealing.

Another unanticipated outcome of the Institute is the link between individual professional development and institutional change. The supervisors responding to the survey commented on personal and professional growth, but they further noted that the benefits of the Institute were being reaped by other teachers:

- "Stephen was extremely pleased with some of the techniques for colleague evaluation about which he learned at the Summer Institute. He has put that into practice in his history department and, through department chairmen meetings, he has passed the information along to other department chairmen."

Others made similar comments:

- "The Academy has profited by the experience of one of our teachers. We are grateful."
- "Andrea has become a generator of ideas and is sought by faculty in this capacity."
- "She gave a staff workshop sharing the evaluation technique."

The returning teachers have not only improved their own competence as teachers, they are serving as catalysts for change. Participants are enthusiastic about implementing their learning, and they have the newly gained confidence to promote change. This has not been without formidable repercussions. Independent schools are bastions of traditionalism whose success in part has come through resisting each new wave of reform. The 25-year-old teacher with three years of experience may discover, as one teacher did, that "coming back full of ideas and energy is awfully frustrating when inertia and indifference are encountered back home." Independent school culture may be impenetrable.

Two teachers from New York who had attended the Institute from the same school reported an event that epitomizes the resistance which young teachers may face in trying to bring about change.. As the new school year approached the teachers wrote a joint letter to the upper school head suggesting what they considered to be benign changes, such as "bringing in lecturers for the benefit of the faculty" and "greater interchange between the experienced and inexperienced teachers." One of them reported that "the letter's impact was similar to a spark in a Bic lighter that has run out of fuel: There were no lasting results, save perhaps for the branding of us as young rebels who showed no regard for the fine traditions of the school."

The lack of respect for pedagogical knowledge in independent schools means that professional growth is equated with years of teaching experience. The young teachers who return eager to implement learning may find few takers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The survey indicates that the experience of being exposed to professional knowledge and a supportive network of peers was overwhelmingly positive for this self-selected

group of able teachers, most of whom lacked any professional training. As we have seen, one result of having been chosen to participate along with a special group of people is enhanced self-confidence. The open forum for discussion allows the young teachers to address difficulties and share successes. It allows them to understand that many problems are the problems of young teachers rather than personal failings. Another result of the Institute is the introduction to teaching methodology and techniques, curriculum issues, and resources which provide teachers with the necessary pedagogical tools for classroom competence. Career commitment, a third outcome of the Institute, is related to both increased confidence and competence as a teacher. Individuals come to recognize that education is a profession and that being part of a professions transcends the confines of a classroom or even a single school.

One of the important findings in the survey is that teachers feel authorized to serve as agents of change in their schools--that the effects of the Institute go beyond the benefits to a single individual and his or her students. The young teachers return with a sense of empowerment and abounding with enthusiasm to share their new learning. The ability to introduce change requires another type of skill, however, and the young teachers often find their ideas thwarted by more senior members of the faculty.

While preserving the best of what the Institute has offered in the past we must begin to look at the potential of these young teachers to influence change, and we must prepare them to confront those elements in the independent school culture that mitigate against change. The "best and brightest" who are motivated to make a difference will not wait around for years to be heard. Indeed, they yearn to make a difference--to have a sense of purpose. As one teacher reported, "I began to feel that the changes we could bring about were neither minor nor unimportant." In the meantime, by helping capable young people to be more effective classroom teachers and by encouraging them to "stay in the business," the Joseph Klingenstein Summer Institute appears to be making headway.

Notes

1. Philip C. Schlechty and Victor S. Vance, Recruitment, Selection and Retention: The Shape of the Teaching Force (Washington, D.C.: The National Institute of Education, 1982), 9; and "Do Academically Able Teachers Leave Education? The North Carolina Case," Phi Delta Kappan, 63, no. 1 (October 1982), 112.

2. J. Myron Atkin, "Who Will Teach in High School?" Daedalus, 10, no. 3 (Summer 1981), 91-92.

3. Jack Kleinert, "Teacher Turnover in the Affluent School District," The Clearing House, 42 (1968), 297-299; and George E. Counts, "Senior Teachers: An Endangered Species," ERIC Document Reproduction Service, no. ED 159 132.

4. George Gallup, "The 15th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public School," Phi Delta Kappan. 65, no. 1 (September 1983), 44.

5. Otto F. Kraushaar, American Nonpublic Schools: Patterns of Diversity (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 169; and Leonard L. Baird, The Elite Schools (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co., 1977), 60.

6. Kraushaar, American Nonpublic Schools, 144-145.

7. Seymour B. Sarason, The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1976), 18.